Chapter Seven

The Impact of Recording Techniques on the Growth of Music in Sri Lanka

As far as the international music industry is concerned, the recording techniques and technologies have strongly influenced the world's music cultures in numerous ways. This has resulted in reshaping musical forms and their structural elements according to the technological innovations and advancements. As a consequence of such developments, these influences have already reached almost all the parts of the world in different forms and in different ways. Two of the most important ways in which this has been taking place are: (i) from center to periphery, i.e. from the origin of technique to the end user and; (ii) from periphery to the center, i.e. from the end user to the origin of the technique, followed by modification or upgrading based upon the feedback from the end user. The existing socio-political and economic circumstances have also been influential in this regard. However, the countries in the periphery seem to be greatly influenced by these trends than the countries in the center of global music industry. Moreover, it is equally true that the countries in the periphery have been drastically colonized in musical terms due to a number of reasons such as: the unequal patterns of technological dissemination, usage or adoption and the related ideological aspects etc. When it comes to the Asian countries as opposed to the technologically inspired western countries, it can be seen that the Asian life-styles and societal norms have been transformed significantly. Sri Lankan music field has also been influenced and transformed significantly since the arrival and adoption of recording technology in the country.

As it has already been mentioned in the preceding chapters, due to lack of a properly cultivated and systematic classical music tradition and a culture of music in Sri Lanka (except folk music including drumming) the fundamental form of music, i.e. songs, can
be identified as having attained prominence as a result of the popularization and increasing dominance of drama and films.

It is a common fact that most of the latest technological innovations take a considerably longer time to reach the under-developed countries for various reasons. Due to this time gap, the latest technologies become outdated when applied in the countries which are not closer to the center of the industry. However, the so called vacuum can also be filled up by means of the technology. But now a days upgraded technologies influence almost instantaneously owing to the technological development.

Various music-related recording techniques ranging from the early mechanical recordings to the modern digital multi-track (Digital Audio Workstations), recordings have been critically shaping and influencing the music in Sri Lanka in identifiable ways. As a result of the early gramophone recording technology, the structure of song reached Sri Lanka and gramophone medium overwhelmingly led to shape the form of the Sri Lankan songs in general. As it has been discussed in the previous chapters, several song patterns and structures, that belong to Indian light music tradition, have had major impacts on (re)-shaping the Sri Lankan song and its basic structure and context. The structure or format is: (1) Introduction; (2) Chorus (sthai); (3) Interlude; (4) Verse; (5) Chorus I (anthara); (6) Interlude; (7) Verse II; and (8) Chorus. However, some songs from other genres were also adjusted as per the above mentioned format or structure, with some other additional ornamental phrases. The structure and the limited time duration, confined to gramophone record’s capacity, were frequently acquired by the vast majority of Sri Lankan musicians to compose light songs targeting new storage media such as cassettes and CDs as well.

It is also noteworthy that a wide range of technique aided by western songs, including hip-hop, techno etc., have also been the inspiring young artists in Sri Lanka.
Despite the bulk of modern techniques existing today, the early recording technology, such as gramophone, deserves special attention in this regard as it has been a major factor behind the establishment of a proper musical industry and a strong generation of professional artists in Sri Lanka\(^1\).

In the meantime, the early technology greatly mediated to preserve the traditional Sri Lankan music genres which share a long historical legacy. At this juncture, the initiatives of Music Research Unit of the Ceylon Broadcasting Corporation, which was established in 1972 and the research of Mr. C. De. S. Kulathilake, appears valuable given their contribution to implement various recording technologies to conserve the traditional music genres considering them as both the cultural legends and resources for research works in the Sri Lankan music context\(^2\).

However, the acoustic quality and the time limitations of 78 rpm discs (three to three and half minutes) were the main causes that had significantly affected music compositions in early days. In order to fit into the so-called time limitations of the 78 rpm disc medium, the musicians and recording technicians had to either trim or abridge their compositions according to the time-frame of the early disc materials as a solution to this issue.

Eg: - An American Composer Igor Stravinskey stated in his autobiography\(^3\) how he overcame these limitations:

“…..In America I had arranged with a gramophone firm to make records of some of my music. This suggested the idea that I should compose something whose length should be determined by the capacity of the record. I should in that way avoid all the trouble of cutting and adapting. And that is how my *Serenade en LA pour Piano* came to be written…”
Similarly, Ferrall elaborates on how some lengthy music forms which belong to the traditional Indian balled forms commonly known as *Braj dhola* or *Bundelkhadi atha* were neglected due to the limitations of the discs\(^4\).

It is interesting to note here that in 1930s most of the Jazz performances were recorded at fast tempos in order to overcome such technical issues\(^5\).

### 7.1 Technological Impact on Sri Lankan Music Genres

Compared to the aforementioned musical traditions, the recording capacity of the discs highly affected some folk genres of Sri Lankan music when recorded on the 78 rpm Disc medium. Even though, there did not exist any composition-oriented musical tradition in the country, except the typical folk songs (generally have four lines and taking only two to three minutes to render), some were highly associated with dramatic tradition, commonly known as *Nadagam* and *Nurthi*. This was the situation when first recording expeditions were brought to Sri Lanka in 1903. Generally, such genres had to be composed for three or three and half minutes (some with or without introduction and interludes. Some early recordings that did not have such long introductions and interludes (as used at present) were suitable for dramas. Thus, these songs could be recorded on discs without any alterations. If the name wasn’t pre-mentioned, it was difficult to recognize the singer due to the poor sound quality of the early recordings.

Some examples of *Nurthi* songs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand name of the record</th>
<th>Disc number</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Song title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ODEN (black colour)</td>
<td>A141002</td>
<td><em>M.V.DevidPerera</em></td>
<td><em>Asuvantamewan</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODEN (Red colour)</td>
<td>KB 0161</td>
<td>............</td>
<td><em>Ambanarandodam</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMV</td>
<td>P152511</td>
<td><em>AneBotheju</em></td>
<td><em>Mandri Devi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMV</td>
<td>K15251</td>
<td><em>AneBotheju</em></td>
<td><em>Dekmehiudarasobana</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.....</td>
<td>96062</td>
<td><em>H.M. Perera</em></td>
<td><em>Sita ma siriya</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, the rendering styles of some existing genres exceeded the time limitation of 78 rpm discs due to the length of their renditions. To overcome such restrictions, some lengthy genres were recorded as series of discs. The following are some of the examples:

1. Buddhist chanting (Maha Piritha - complete) - N9337 to 9342 HMV label (1938) 6 discs

2. Buddhist birth story poems (Jataka Kavya) - N13099 to 13100 HMV label

(It has been noted here that the early recordings of Buddhist chanting by laymen were also recorded to discs)

7.2 North Indian Singing Styles

However, when North Indian singing styles, especially Khayal, was recorded on 78 rpm discs, the musicians had to confront some problems because of the typical structure of earlier compositions by Indian musicians. As per the Kinnear’s view, (cited by Farrell) because of such limitations musicians refused to record their masterpieces because they found it contrary to the spirit of their art. These were also recorded on discs with limited elaborations by depicting their basic elements. Most recorded performances commenced by singing just the fundamental or tonic note Sa (shadja) briefly, instead of singing long alap, followed by the main composition with some improvisations suitable within the time limit.

In general, according to their rendering patterns, these styles could not be limited to an exact time-frame and need to be improvised for even more than one hour, depending on the artistic skill of the artist. Hence, in order to overcome these time restrictions of 78 rpm discs with their typical rendering styles, the musicians had to clip the salient features to match the structure of well-found ragas. As Farrell has correctly pointed out, the early
recordings might be thought of as “snapshots” of a particular genre and style\textsuperscript{10}. Some Sri Lankan records, belonging to that period, could be seen as having the same characteristics of Indian recordings. Examples:


After the introduction of double-sided discs, the musicians were able to get rid of the time restrictions to some extent.

However, with the introduction of EP, LP and celluloid tape media such as spools and later, cassettes for recording music, the time limitation problem was somewhat solved. Thus, the typical structures pertaining to some music genres could be maintained in a proper manner.

\section*{7.3 Gramophone Songs and Film Songs}

During 1939-1947, there was a growing demand to record Buddhist devotional songs (\textit{Bodu Beti gee}) and other patriotic songs in Sinhala, based on Hindi and Tamil tunes. Further, with the popularization of Hindi film songs, this trend frequently increased. In the meantime, some western melodies also influenced Sri Lankan film songs directly and indirectly via Indian films. As a result, of such imitations, musicians and recording engineers attempted to utilize the original features that were fitted into both music and technology. When coping such genres of original Tamil and Hindi songs to make their Sinhala versions especially for films (from 1947-1965s) as well as gramophone songs for different purposes, Sri Lankan musicians directly followed the original recordings in order to transcribe their notations. In the same way, there was an ongoing tradition of using these discs to imitate the playing techniques and playing styles of different instruments that had been originally recorded on 78 rpm discs by Indian musicians.
Compared to both original Hindi songs and their Sinhala versions, it could be clearly seen that sound effects and other nuances are imitated in the same manner. Even though the initial period of Sinhala films music was led by the South Indian musicians and recording engineers in their studios, the practice was later came to the hands of local musicians at local level.

In some cases, certain forms of music were created according to the feasibility of the technology. With the growth and development of Indian cinema, there emerged ghazal, a light music genre, besides the traditional and popular ghazal style. This trend was also a product of the recording technology in India in late 20th century, as a style in demand in Hindi Cinema. The main features of the new ghazal style were limited to pre-composed tunes without having improvisational elements. Similarly, in 1970, another form of modern ghazal, with western instruments, also emerged. These were not only disseminated through films as the phonograms thoroughly focused on the middle class audience in India. These were also composed to notations without improvisations. Though ghazal was introduced in Sri Lanka by some local musicians, who had training in Indian music from Indian musicians, the modern ghazal influenced Sri Lanka as a result of Hindi films and the cassettes. The new form of ghazal was also composed by Sri Lankan musicians for their albums as well as Sri Lankan movies as well as to cassettes of artists. Following songs can be given as examples:

1. “Mage Namali bedi Adare” in ‘Gopalu Handa’ film
2. “Marambari Kolavi pemuwe”
3. “Charudehenura”

The same happened to the Qawwali (Qawwali which is a devotional song tradition belonging to Sufism) in Sri Lankan music since the dissemination of Hindi film Qawwalis. Those Indian film based commercial qawwalis were also employed with many western instruments and fewer improvisations like in-commercial ghazals. This style
was embedded in the early *Sinhala* films and cassettes as a Buddhist devotional song tradition, and the style was nicely sung by Mohideen Beg, a Sri Lankan singer.

1. *Buddham Saranam Gachchami* in *Angulimala* film\(^{16}\)
2. *Budunge Ama Dhrme*\(^{17}\)
3. *Game Gode Sidadiye*\(^{18}\)

Apart from the typical music genres, some music genres which emerged by means of improved technologies also resulted in diversity. As a result, of applying these structures to music compositions, the conventional structures of common songs began to transform in the context of Sri Lankan music.

Ex:-. *Oba (Hitumatepawela...)*\(^{19}\)

However, with those technological restrictions and gratitude to the early technology, a generation of professional artists came to exist in Sri Lankan music industry after 1939. The interesting point was that the majority of the artists who came to the field of music were Christians during this time. But some of them embraced Buddhism later on. Though these artists were strictly confined to the bonds of companies that produced and marketed music compositions\(^{20}\), the main purpose of recruiting artists for such purposes was to establish music as a commercial industry in the country.

But the authors of Roger Wallis and Kristen Malm\(^{21}\) have given a rather critical analysis in which the year 1970 has been stated as the establishment year of music as a commercial industry in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, they have pointed out that all the recordings were produced and distributed by a well-known Indian company known as EMI, prior to 1970s within the Sri Lankan music market. It has been clearly mentioned that they had employed recording equipment at SLBC to produce their raptures and then distributed those discs in the country in the end of the 1930s.
On the other hand, it was difficult to deploy larger recording ensembles employed to record music as the Indian artists had done at that time. The major reason behind this was the limited space of recording studios in Sri Lanka. However, with the advancements, larger recording orchestras were deployed for recording during period from 1940 to 1970s.

However, all the related music genres were recorded on some other mediums such as cassettes and CDs utilizing advanced technologies. Hence, music, musical instruments and musical effects were transformed and long introductions and interludes were added according to musicians’ wish.

### 7.4 Impact on Sri Lankan Musicians

A noteworthy feature of the early gramophone recordings compositions is that the vocal quality of the singer has not been considered to be an important factor during earlier times, especially in comparison to the present day. If the singer was able to maintain only the pitch during singing he or she could become established as a "singer". However, as the quality of radio broadcast gradually improved and various other media such as cassettes were introduced, both the acoustic quality of the singer and the ability to sing according to the pitch became the important criteria in making someone a successful singer. Even though the SLBC had adequate technical capacity to adjust some of the vocal qualities of the singers, they did not have the technological aid to refine voices of singers. Thus, they had to make attempts to introduce talented artists to the field of Sri Lankan music.

Conducting auditions when recruiting artists to the Corporation and granting radio grades to them was a strategy which the Corporation used in order to come up with the "best" singers of the country. But the situation began to transform with the introduction of advanced technologies in the commercial field. However, some unsuitable effects such as
“echo” instead of reverbs (normally the effect of echo is emerged in a large space like hall while within the small space such as a room the effect of reverberation is created) were added to give a shade to voices of program presenters (commentators), especially while they were presenting music programs. A common example is the program known as “Pipidena Gayake Parapura” (the generation of blooming singers). They added “echo” effect within the studio premises. As a result, these kinds of unsuitable and irrelevant effects (especially due to the limits of space) like echoes were applied to outdoor music concerts in Sri Lanka ignoring their proper application.

In order to be established as a singer based on other media such as cassettes and CDs, a vocalist needs to have an attractive voice. Thus, the vocalists tend to make use of additional effects and other capabilities to fine tune their voices by employing advanced technologies. Compared to the other technologies that were used in the earlier days, the contemporary digital recording technologies and techniques (especially Digital Audio workstations) have made powerful impacts on this situation not only in Sri Lanka but also all around the world. The following extract from an interview between the researcher and the well-known Indian Sound engineer Mr. B. C. Yesudas\textsuperscript{22} clearly points to this fact:

“…Nowadays, it’s easy to become a singer without having a proper voice, pitch and taal (rhythm). These days, both talented and untalented people come here without prior rehearsals and totally depend on technology. Similarly, this technology is not only affecting singers but it impacts on some instrumentalists also. Some players like to record long music passages part by part. So, modern musicians are very happy with these things…”

In the same manner, less talented people have entered the field of music in Sri Lanka and consequently, the field of music in terms of quality, has suffered a setback too, due to the overdependence on technology. Such singers don’t have melodic voices or/and the required level of skill, training and practice. They depend on the technology for making
up for all the deficiencies in their singing or performance but they are badly exposed in live concerts as they are obviously unable to perform up to the mark before the audience in live concerts. However, talented and trained artists perform very well in live concerts, just as in their recorded albums.

In that sense, modern technology and techniques have a marvelous power to “generate” artists apart from creating compositions. But counter to that practice, skilled and talented artists use the technology as a tool only to fine tune some of their diminutive weaknesses. For example, even a skillful vocalist cannot reach the proper pitch occasionally due to the unavoidable health conditions. In such cases, it would not be problematic to use modern and advanced features to overcome such unavoidable circumstances. The proper benefits of technology need to be obtained in such situations in order to overcome natural obstacles. Otherwise, the necessity of technical advancement is not required. The following quotation illustrate as an appropriate and fine example for the application of advanced features to overcome some critical incidents in recording:

“One day a call on my mobile phone, a deep pleasant voice, asking me to arrange a song, a “Nadaagam song”, in my own fusion style. That was how I made first contact with Nissanka Diddeniya… I can remember while in the mixing stage realizing that the Maddal was slightly off tune! Therefore, I used Cubase to tune the drums to a pitch, which would clash with the rest of music…”

However, this practice could only be performed in music recordings. As far as the vocalists are concerned, a person must have a properly trained voice with a balanced tone, pitch and concentration.

Even though technological developments gave rise to easy ways to record music compositions or to create musicians, artists have to pay more attention than earlier
practices in order to face the sensitivity of the new acoustic and electronic instruments to
perform accurate vocal or instrumental recordings, otherwise the fairies can be visible by
means of the technological advancements.

In relation to the early technological methodologies, rehearsals were considered essential
in order to make sure the final production would not be incompatible with the recording
materials, given the poor status of the existing technology at that time. In the Sri Lankan
context at the initial stage of the music industry, the artists used to practice during the day
time and record at night.

However, this practice began to change with the developments of the recording
technology, especially with the arrival of multi-track recording techniques and the
medium of portable cassette tapes. Practically, mixed or unmixed pre-recorded multi-
tracks of compositions were made available for the artists to rehearse their voices instead
of having prior rehearsals as a common practice. Nevertheless, the busy work schedule of
musicians led them to engage in such practices.

Further, as a common practice, the vast majority of artists attempt to spend the same time
for both rehearsals and recording by enjoying the facility of recording “section by section
and line by line”. Even though this practice has been criticized by some musicians, this
cannot be considered a serious negative issue even for a skilled artist, because the culture
of recording is entirely different from live performances. In Sri Lanka, musicians always
attempt to apply and think live music performances as an evaluation scheme to examine
other artists (vocalists) talents. Even though it is equally valid to live music contexts, it
cannot be considered a principle or an essential factor in recording contexts.

The view on the modern recording technologies of the eldest songstress in the country
Ms. Viviyan Boralessa is different from those of the others. She recorded her songs on
gramophone discs. The following extract reveals her attitude towards the new technology:

“Even though I had to sing to gramophone records from the very beginning to the end of the compositions due to certain technological limitations, I had to sing section by section when I re-recorded my songs according to the modern multi-track recording technique. Compared to the previous recording techniques, the new technologies and techniques have made the task of both the instrumentalists and the singers a comparatively easy one…”

Similarly, new features of the recording technology provide easy facilities to transpose recorded compositions from one scale to another without causing any changes:

“We first recorded the song “Wasanawa Ridee pahan” on B♭ key. Then we transferred all the tracks into C scale as we felt that C as better than B♭…”

The mass audiences in consequence tend to criticize technology as well as certain musically enriched creations that are based on the same technology. On the other hand, some music compositions that were created and produced by applying the new technology in wrong manner (those have been described below) by novel musicians during the last two decades have resulted in establishing such misconceptions. Even though some creative young musicians applied the new technology, demolishing such discourses well established artists apply the new technological tenets to their productions without destroying the quality and musicality. But, as far as the world of music is concerned, musicians have gained proper advantage of the technology by extending limitations and dimensions of music with the help of new technologies and techniques.
Some musicians have tended to use what is called the "section by section" methods often for their recordings. As far as the structures of the majority of music compositions are concerned, same melodic structures and patterns (normally introduction music is used as the interludes and similarly, the melody of the first verse is used as the second verse. Again, the chorus is used three to four times) have been deployed according to the lyrical structure as a common practice from early times. As a result, the modern day recording engineers who use DAW have to apply only the “copy-paste” method of previously recorded distinguished three structures (introduction, chorus and verse) to form a song (only for music composition). Even though this is a convenient practice which saves time of the final production, the experienced sound engineers generally do not use it in professional studios.

7.5 Advantages of Magnetic and Multi-track Recordings

Magnetic recordings also have revolutionized the field of music in many ways. It has laid the basis to change some earlier practices and procedures so that the recordings are possible to be able to edit with the splicing technology. It is also possible to obtain qualitative audio fidelities than the previous recordings as well as detailed characteristics of sounds.

In conjunction with the international recording industry, the magnetic recording technology has provided the Sri Lankan musicians with a valuable opportunity to overcome the time restrictions and also to correct their mistakes while recording. A comparative look at the earlier techniques would reveal that the multi-track recording technology has given rise to a variety of new features. Nevertheless, recording and mixing have enable isolating other instrumental tracks and various effects to be added to each track without affecting others.
As it was mentioned in the fifth chapter, radio broadcasting initially depended on 78 rpm discs whereas later, tape recording (tape medium) technology was utilized as the standard medium of recording not only for music but also for the other commercial programs. All live music programs were recorded on tape medium employing large orchestras with voice at the same time in a similar manner to the gramophone era. However, with the introduction of DAWs Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC) and other regional broadcasting stations have taken a remarkable step to utilize such highly sensitive and high quality digital technology to record and preserve their programs for the last six to seven years. According to their production environment structure, there are two types of music programs viz. live and post productions, are being conducted. For the post productions, software that are commonly employed in the recording industry are used. However, software such as: Adobe Audition, Cool Edit… etc. are being used for the live recordings.

So far the utilization of early tape-based 2, 4, and 8. track counts are concerned, sound engineers and musicians have attempted to overcome technological restrictions in an admirable way. In such a limited technological context, CBC and later the SLBC and some private studios have introduced and recorded music compositions in a creative manner by applying newer contemporary techniques. The following are some of such instances:

1. Four channel recording machine that was available in SLBC, had utilized by then recording engineers Mr. U. Ariyawimal and Gunadasa Kapuge to create especial effects such as Chip monk. This was not previously available in Sri Lanka. However, this effect is skillfully inserted to the Sinhala song “Punchi hamu” sung by the eminent singer Victor Rathnayake. This is one of the first songs recorded by using this effect in the Sri Lankan history produced in 1960s. Later, the effect was utilized by the group Gypsies for their song “Kurumitto” (aliens) in a private studio (though the English word for Kurumitto is dwarfs, that word was used in that song context to denote Aliens).
2. *Maaliniye* (A common name for a girl), a song by Victor Rathnayake which depicts the contradictory condition between the conscious and subconscious mind of a man towards a girl. To show the subconscious mind musician utilized the base voice of the same singer while singing in the normal manner (middle octave) as to show the conscious mind, both voices were recorded back to back to indicate the contradictions.

Where the Sri Lankan music compositions are concerned, it is clear that the local musicians have not gained the best benefits of the technology (with regard to the length) since they have limited themselves to three to four minutes song sequences due to lack of both proper mechanism to cultivate and propagate instrumental music and experiences to extend music compositions in the country. Even though the SLBC had taken initial measures to do such a service, it has waned with time.

However, with the arrival of cassette as a commercial storage medium of releasing music albums in Sri Lanka since 1977, the situation drastically changed thus transforming the music recordings and the programs that were launched by National broadcasting. Simultaneously, private studios popped up and upgraded with latest technologies (With equipment and also with interior arrangements suitable for multi-track recording such as: equipping cubicles, headphone facilities) available mainly in Colombo, the commercial capital of the country. At the time of speaking, the situation of SLBC was challenged due to its low level technology. According to the vocalists, it was difficult to find experienced recording technicians and talented musicians for their recording\(^3\). Most of the graded artists, especially the vocalists instinctively stimulated to the cassette industry to launch their private albums because those private companies were able to assist well-experienced recording engineers and talented instrumentalists than the SLBC. As a result, demand for well fitted technology, there emerged a commercially established musical culture with singers based on cassettes and a bulk of cassette music directors in the
country. Among them Rohana Weerasingha and late musician and music director Stanly Peris are two names that deserve special attention.

This technological background has drastically affected the music industry in numerous ways. With the characteristic quality of the clearness of the sound in one hand, the advanced “effects” for gaining some depth and an ornamental beauty to the sound on the other, the tape-based and hard disk based multi-track recording mechanisms came to be largely famous among the musicians. Similarly, separate tracks of different instruments were also able to be maintained while preserving the above mentioned qualities of sound of the recorded music compositions.

With the advanced features of multi-track recording, the common practice of music recording began to change, the musicians began to create an arena to involve recording sessions as per their convenience in the course of time. But this practice is also criticized by musicians considering it as a negative method when compared to recording music composition as collaborative and collective. Expressing his views Tissasiri Perera mentioned as follows;

“In the earlier days of recording, musicians got together and made their effort to create an aesthetically and musically enriched final output. By doing so, everyone had an idea about the composition and what was going on in the recording process. But now the situation has changed sometimes from the whole orchestra to solo artist. Therefore, the musicians do not have an idea about the composition. Consequently, this practice has negatively affected the success of current music compositions due to the habit of conducting recordings without employing a whole orchestra as in early practices…”

The vast majority of musicians commonly share this ideology towards multi-track recording technology. However, on many occasions, (except small-scale home recording
environments, most home recording studios are small scale and equipment wise some studios adequately developed. The interaction and collaboration of musicians can be seen and all musical arrangements are performed at the studio during the recording even today. When faced with some unavoidable situations such as the limited space within the studio and technological limitations etc., some musicians prefer to practice the above mentioned strategy in order to overcome these obstacles. Conversely, criticizing advanced features of technology and modern applications by emphasizing and praising the old practices have resulted in negative consequences. Even though they have mentioned the collaboration and the practice of recording those compositions together with the full orchestras as the main reason behind the success of the early music compositions, a relative majority of contemporary music compositions has also been popularized as aesthetic creations. It is also remarkable that even some of the contemporary compositions which are largely based on new technological methods and recording techniques have been able to retain their aesthetic quality and the popularity.

On the other hand, as a special opportunity, musicians with a capability of playing different instruments have been given a fair chance to mix their creativity with music compositions using the multi-track recording (both in tape based and hard disk based). This opportunity was never given to the musicians by the earlier technologies. Recently a song of the well-known singer Sunil Editisingha was composed and recorded by Ananda Perera who is a well-trained musician utilizing the reins of many musical instruments in Sri Lanka\textsuperscript{32}.

Likewise, a considerable attention has been paid to such electronic musical instruments as key boards, electronic guitars and drums with this recording technology. As a further advantage of the possibility of capturing sensitive sound waves, musicians utilize low frequency based highly sensitive and uncommon instruments with unique timbres that were very rarely utilized in the earlier compositions such as \textit{Esraj, Dilruba, Udekk\text{\textit{i}}} to modern compassions with the digital technology.
With the development of multi-track recording technology (both analog and digital), some earlier limitations, especially those related to certain techniques, could be resolved. The technique of vocal harmony can be especially pointed out with regard to this. According to this technology, two voices are employed to present vocal harmonies in a live manner. When the recording technology was in its initial stage, two voices (sometimes more than two) were utilized to record vocal harmonies for recordings. However, such limitations have now been overcome by means of the developed technology. At present, the same artist is used to harmonize for recordings (But this is limited only to the recording nature).

Unlike the earlier methods of recordings which were confined to limited track counts, the increasing level of track counts in the modern times has added complexity to the music compositions.

Due to the unlimited and limited tracks with ranges (e.g. 48 tracks) musicians add different types of note combinations and Counterpoints according to the Western principles to fine tune music compositions as ornamental effects need to be integrated to their lyrical meanings. However, these additional effects and music phrases also make the creation more confusing.

Due to the new and advanced features of the developed technology (from 1977 up-to-date) musicians have attempted to release their original works which were previously recorded on 78 rpm discs, LP media and SLBC music programs.

This has transformed the music and the tempo of the original compositions, orchestration, vocal qualities as well as the contextual meaning of the music compositions because of the transformation from one technology to another and, from one medium to another. Similarly, an ample space has been allocated to electronic musical instruments such as key boards, electronic guitars and drums under this recording technology. With regard to
the contextual applicability and the meanings of the compositions, the practice of new arrangements into an earlier composed production thoroughly impacts on the artistic and ideological norms and value systems of the producers. For example, the gramophone song which described the renunciation of domestic life of the king Siddartha, titled “Silumini Saya Wadmim Ramya Tautisa Bhawan” originally sung by R. M. Ibrahim has been re-launched by the Sri Lankan songstress Samita Mudunkotuwa based on new music in her new CD album entitled “Silumini Saya Wandim”. This is just one example for the above fact (apart from this songstress, some other leading artists have re-launched the early songs with new music for their music albums). Even though there is a space for such creations to share the same value embedded in the original compositions, it is quite doubtful whether the newly created and improved ‘versions’ are able to produce the same feelings among the traditional audience. Accordingly, every musical element, electronic instrumentations including the voice of the songstress results in an erotic sense. As mentioned in the sixth chapter sometimes this may lead to change the aesthetic feeling of audience.

Similarly, the practice of rearranging music according to new technology has gradually increased with the Digital Audio workstations due to their advanced features of recording and editing capabilities. Even though it is true that this technology has been mostly utilized in a proper manner, there is some evidence to prove that there are certain misuses of it, mainly directed towards financial and commercial goals.

Currently, it is incredibly easy to modify even a previously recorded composition by using software to reproduce the same composition with additional settings with computer technicians who have mastered in the relevant software packages. By means of the new recording techniques available, some popular albums of famous late singers, especially H. R. Jothipala, and Milton Perera have been reproduced and released with harsh and unfitted instrumentations by such popular bands even without changing the original voice of artist. Compared to the original composition it is very difficult to find an aesthetic aura
in such cassettes as fake art products. Thus, technology has been sometimes used to destroy the realistic nature and possibilities in an unbelievable manner. With regard to the above mentioned examples, one can understand the way in which these distortions are taking place in the world today. But, the researcher is of the view that technology has to be utilized in an innovative manner to fine-tune and enhance the aesthetic quality of a creation than using in the above mentioned commercial-based practices. Similarly, there emerged a genre of a “Non-stop” song tradition by extracting the portions of famous songs of locally and internationally popular artists adjusting with fast tempos. These compilations were/are sung by popular music bands in the country. Some musicians used those technological, musical elements along with electronic instrumentations in a creative way according to the suitability of the music compositions with the influenced genres and the tradition that has mainly influenced the so called compositions. But some untrained and unskilled artists have utilized those instruments in a harsh manner just focusing on earning money out of business. These kinds of practices have made strong and critical impacts on the minds and appreciation of the public.

Apart from that, this tradition (recording) has been critical in a number of ways to appreciate music without in the real context of the other art forms such as stage dramas and films. In many cases, some music directors attempt to release songs that are blended with the popular and famous stage dramas with the request of audience as a method of preserving the originality.

7.6 Development of Computerized Music, Digital Audio Workstations and other Contemporary trends

The practice of utilizing computerized forms of music in connection with MIDI and MIDI equipped sonic tools for composing and synthesizing music has drastically transformed the environment(s) and methodologies associated with the previously known practices into an unprecedented nature. As it has already been discussed in the fifth
chapter, MIDI technology and computerized sound synthesizing and recording technologies were first introduced to the local context by the eminent musician Dilup Gabadamudalige in the 1980s. He was followed by a generation of young musicians such as; Ranga Dasanayake, Ranidu Lankage, Bhatiya Jayakody and Santush Weeraman (commonly known as Santhush and Bhatiya), Iraj Weeraratne, and some groups such as Centigradez…etc. The process marks a creative adaptation of the new technology to the context of music compositions. One objective behind such experiments has been to make parallels with the trends in the contemporary global musical traditions.

However, it is rather doubtful whether they were practically successful in achieving their intended goals. Most of their attempts have been to reproduce some clichés. As far as some of their music compositions are concerned, it is difficult to find a Sri Lankan identity among them. Similarly, some of them try to release their music albums to different audiences including some foreign audiences, by translating the original language according to using the target community’s languages as well as employing their musical instruments. By and large this is in a way a practice of one-to-one translation.

However, two Indian musicians known as Hariharan and Leslie Lewis were able to achieve their goals in a qualitative manner by preserving their national and musical identity in their album “Colonial Cousins”.

However, some contemporary Sri Lankan young artists especially Mr. Iraj Weerarathe has become popular as a music composer around the world, as they compose music according to the current music trends and make use of the technology accordingly.

Similarly, the arrival of certain musicians equipped with a number of latest technologies has also resulted in unprecedented transformations, especially because their use and attachment to such internationally popular forms such as R&B (Rhythm and Blues), Hip-hop, House music, and currently Electro, Techno, Dub-step etc. They have also
introduced remixing methodologies focusing on modern Digital Audio Workstations and other composing methods.

Compared to western hip-hop music genre, the above mentioned compositions inspired by the rap styles were introduced as hip-hops by radio agencies in an improper manner. A closer observation would reveal that it is questionable whether most of them could be considered "hip-hop given their lack of the most decisive characteristic features.

Generally, some of the songs composed by the young artists Santush Weeraman and Bhatiya Jayakody mark a satisfactory level of adopting the latest technological innovations to their music activities (the above stated musicians have also been composed such a creative musically enriched compositions applying with these technological tools). The following are some of such successful creations:

1. *Unmadini Hanguna*\textsuperscript{34}
2. *Ran Kurahan Malasema*\textsuperscript{35}
3. *Sara Sihina Rahase*\textsuperscript{36}

A characteristic feature of these creations is that they consist of combinations of acoustic instruments such as flutes and violins, the typical Sri Lankan instruments (*horane, uddekkki, davul etc.*) with computerized technologies. These artists have also moved beyond the traditional Sri Lankan music thereby being inspired from internet and world musical traditions as indicated by the two singers;

“...Sometimes we send the tracks, but we usually fly down because the creator has to be around the location to get the 100% perfect result”\textsuperscript{37}
But most of the world artists utilize this technology successfully for their creations. However Sri Lankan people are lethargic to apply these advanced features due to the traditional conceptions.

It is also important to note that most of the young artists have now tended to totally depend on computer software without even taking into consideration the creative aspect of music. Given a number of defects that exists in them, it is quite impossible to consider these creations to be a different "genre" in their broadest sense.

A common feature of these compositions is the practice of prioritizing electronic instruments and pre-recorded samples instead of using original instruments. But, the usage of samples for music composing does not provide the proper feeling of the contextual meaning of a composition in some cases. Even though it gives completeness to a composition, the proper aesthetic feeling and the dynamic nature pertaining to live performances cannot be obtained in such instrumental phrases and other rhythms at all. On most occasions, the nullity of the creative imagination has led to such implementations. On the other hand, the influence of the typical nature of using these samplers and other technology-based sound applications are another reason for such changes.

Even though it is possible to produce realistic effects by properly applying those software-based and other electronic means, the majority of these creations have failed to prevent generating harsh feelings and unproductive compositions. However, it is also true that a particular group of listeners still enjoy these creations in Sri Lanka.

As far as the Sri Lankan “artistic songs” are concerned, the instrumentalists usually attempt to add special nuances and playing patterns considering their suitability and emphasize the lyrical meanings of the songs. Similar to the other instruments, the percussion instruments were also used for this purpose. This practice was commonly utilized for music compositions by the late musician Mr. Wijerathna Ranatunga who was
one of the renowned *Tabla* players in Sri Lanka and the so called practice has given not only an aesthetic quality to the songs but it has also provided an area for researching into the culture of songs in Sri Lanka. In certain songs, the music techniques that belong to western music such as counterpoint have also been complimented by using the instrument called 'Tabla.' The following song a good example for this:

(1). *Bomaluwemal Suwandaka Petali* by Sanath Nandasiri\(^{38}\)

The song describes the thoughts of a little Buddhist monk who lives in a monastery and relive in his past life of laity. To create the contextual environment, the *tabla* is played imitating the typical playing style of “Hevisi drumming” (greeting of drums for worship) which is commonly used in the Sri Lankan Buddhist temples as 'Buddhist music.

However, due to the application of pre-recorded samplers, this trend has vanished within the context of the contemporary modern music compositions. Similarly, the modern musicians do not apply these types of innovative preferences for their compositions though the technology is available.

Due to unavoidable financial obstacles, even some experienced and mature artists have tended to make use of such technological methodologies as an alternative. Introduction of computer-based Digital Audio Workstations have further popularized this trend as they provide the capability of utilization of samples and sound synthesis.

But only technologically enriched musicians utilize the samplers and synthetic instruments (MIDI compatible) in a proper manner. In most cases, it becomes clear that majority of the musicians who use computer based technological music composition always limit themselves to a few selected equipment as agreed by a leading artist;
“...My studio system consists of an 88 Key Yamaha KX-88 MIDI Master Keyboard and a computer system powered by an Athlon K-7 600 Mhz processor with 256 MB system RAM, Hard disk capacity of 40 GB a powerful graphic card and a Sound card with analog and Digital Ins and Outs.... Most of the sounds that I use for my musical creations are from sound samples that I have purchased or created myself...”\textsuperscript{39}

However, it has to be stressed that both the creativity and technology have to be symbiotically mixed so that the final product would be a satisfactory one. The sole dependence on technology has disregarded and badly affected the creativity of the artists. These trends have inevitably resulted in negative impacts towards technological applications of current musical productions.

7.7 Private Recording Set-up

Private or personal recording set-up at homes has largely transformed the music field during the last ten to fifteen years in Sri Lanka. People have started setting up recording systems at their homes for doing personal or private recordings. Some artists also have made small arrangements at home for recording their music on their own. It has reduced their dependency on commercial recording studios, as well as, the expenditure involved in recording and mixing their compositions.

In the context of music production in Sri Lanka, three major factors that affect the music production can be identified as:

1. The affordability and the applicability of computer equipment and DAW software in the common market place.
2. The growing demand and interest of the younger generations to follow computer based music production courses.
3. Higher recording cost of the professional or commercial studios.

It is a bit unfortunate that several untalented and untrained people have currently established their own institutes in Sri Lanka in order to offer computer based music production courses to the people interested in learning recording techniques. It has resulted in nothing but imitating the modern genres and the songs of the well-established artists in an improper manner. In the same way, these people generally use websites, such as “You Tube”, as common channels of sharing and publishing their creations within the peer groups. Internet has proved as a convenient medium but no one has been able to overcome this kind of challenge.

Marking a turning point in the musical culture of Sri Lanka, a Buddhist monk named Rev. Bibilandiye Mahanama has entered the field of music for the first time in the country with personal recording set-up or arrangement, with a proper knowledge of music as well as sound recording technique. As far as the Buddhist Monastic Discipline or Monastic codes are concerned, involving in sensuous fields such as drama, music, dancing and cinema. is strictly prohibited for the Buddhist monks. However, as far as the usage and objectivity of this art is concerned it is closely linked with the Buddhist principle of mind relaxation. As a result of proper use of recording capabilities and extended compositions being full of real musical nature, he has created an active response to the stagnated song culture in Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, the possibility of accessing some equipment and Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) for a reasonable cost has resulted in a number of issues such as low quality creations and music becoming less professional. This clearly points to the qualitative difference between the home recording studios and the professional studios. Likewise, using those studios as a money saving method has also affected the sonic character of their music compositions.
Accommodating home theatre-based productions by some private radio channels has led to further deterioration of the genres. Based on the argument that there should be a room for the creativity of younger generations, there is a tendency to recruit younger people for almost all the important positions in these companies. Solely focusing on the "taste" of the younger generations, these channels have allocated a considerably long air time to a particular set of genres in their program agenda. Emergences of such media also caused to introduce modern and updated technological features to the field of music in Sri Lanka. This has seriously affected to the government radio channels.

Even though the application of lyrics, musical elements and the performing tactics and gestures of previous songs have been severely criticized by the music critics, it should not be forgotten that this kind of experiments have also diversified the field. But as a whole there is no such poetic value in the majority of technology-based lyrical compositions.

Instead of depicting comprehensive and deep meanings throughout the compositions (songs), there is also a trend of composing songs so that the different lines would give different meanings.

Example: - *Rambari Kiyapan Nume Nombare* (Rambari, tell your number!)

*Tanduri Kamuda Noda Barabare* (Shall we eat tanduri without saying 'no'?)

Wakare kauda inne Jaramare …… ⁴⁰ (Who is there busy in Wakare?)

As far as the musical features of some compositions are concerned, a common nature of the majority of such compositions has been the lack of a coherent melody and a rhythmic priority. However, these songs are largely attracted by the younger generations of Sri Lanka today.

It is remarkable that even the eminent artists who generally share dissatisfaction with the modern productions have applied contemporary technologically inspired methods to their productions in the last decade. For example, Sri Lanka's prominent songstress Nanda
Malini lounged a CD album (together with a cassette) "Andaheraya" (music composed by Rohanaa Weerasingha and music programmed and recorded by Suresh Maliyadde) that was completely produced by means of software based recording tools and samples.

Many prominent artists (belongs to the classical or Sambhawya category) now use technology as a tool to extend their stereotypical ideology in order to provide a valuable aesthetical experience to their audience. However, it has been common that they always seek to utilize a selected group of instruments in this regard. Even though the younger generation of artists also reveals a similar objective due to the concept of “addressing juvenility”, they attempt to emphasized rhythms, different genres, and other technological effects for some of their creations. Similarly, some effects are utilized rather unnecessarily in an unsuitable manner merely resulting in a technical-electronic and a synthetic experience. In many cases, using pitch correction tools as a music effect can be seen very commonly in the contemporary music compositions of youngsters.

7.8 General Failures in the Use of Technology in Contemporary Compositions

In the case of most of the music compositions of the novice artists who are dependent on the technological settings, the main purpose of the application of technology has been to hide their inabilities and limitations. The reality in many cases is that majority of these compositions are not directed towards aesthetic objectives. Rather many of the younger artists tend to use technology solely to gain popularity. The following issues are common in most of these compositions:

1. Attempting to provide an unsuitable Western mood or a trait
2. Employing instruments without knowing their proper ranges
3. Improper applications of playing techniques that are related to acoustic instruments
4. Employing unwanted sound effects for music compositions
5. Beat highlighting and making rhythms faster

Accordingly, lack of creativity, improper raw material, inadequate experimentation and lack of experience are some of the mostly visible issues in the field of contemporary music production. It can also be seen that various radio channels daily disseminate such creations thereby influencing their audience to change their “aesthetic opinions”. This practice is merely based on certain commercial goals.

These cultural and social influences are also constructed by certain ideological and aesthetic experiences based on cultural context(s) in which people live.

In “An Essay Concerning Human Understanding”41, John Locke of the empirical school of Modern Western Philosophy has mentioned two concepts on “knowing”; speculative knowledge (theoretical) and practical knowledge. These concepts are highly related to the process of human’s understanding. According to this, the human mind is a blank slate (the word “Tabula Rasa” which is a Latin word that means “blank slate”) and exercises are needed to fill it. There are not any innate ideas prior to such experiences. Further, sensitivity of other forms of art is also needed to develop such a proper creativity, knowledge and an experience. Most of the novice artists are experiencing the same trends. Such styles are spontaneously affecting their creations due to certain cultural contacts and sometimes these trends are blindly imitated as a passion. These practices no doubt have made significant impacts on such an evolutionary process.

As far as the majority of age old music compositions (this phenomenon is not only valid for music but is also applicable to other forms of art) are concerned, culturally established raw material and other ideological and socio-political influences have led to long lasting
popularity. The so-called "cultural erosion" which took place since 1977 as an outcome of 'open economy' and certain other socio-cultural factors enhanced the situation. These trends have both negatively and positively turned the major facets of Sri Lankan musical culture.

Even though the utilization of recording and other related technologies have been developed day by day in the field of music in Sri Lanka, some musicians argue that these advancements are not properly applied in order to cultivate a fine aesthetic experience:

“Even though we have a proper technology and latest equipment, most of the musicians do not have a proper knowledge on how to handle these technological tools to fulfill the creativity. We took part as instrumentalists for these creations and without having a developed technology; these musicians are able to done fine creations. Even the present day younger generation of Sri Lanka tends to appreciate these creations in a similar manner to what people did in the 1960s. But musicians are totally depending on the technology today. It is difficult to find the melodious value in most compositions today.”

As a result, the age old music compositions are reappearing as a common trend due to their incomparable creativeness and the unique features.

### 7.9 The Impact of Digital Technology on Musical Performances

Compared to the other early technological tools, the performing structure is now being changed in Sri Lanka (this is a global reality today) due to the technological methods as mentioned above. Before the so-called "digital era", the artists utilized larger orchestras and simultaneously performed to give a fine and live aesthetic experience to their audience. But with the introduction of the methods of digital recording, (both digital
multi-track and computer-based music production methodologies) the usage of live orchestras dramatically removed from musical performing contexts (especially performance based). Instead, the pre-recorded tracks are now used to fill up the vacuum of the orchestral backups.

With the increasing demand and popularity to music and entertainment, new equipment or entertaining devises such as ‘Karaoke players’ have been introduced to mass market by several entertainment companies. The ‘Persang Karaoke’ player is one of its kind and which was launched by the ‘Persang Entertainment Pvt. Ltd’ in India including with 3500 built in songs in digital format with different languages, dynamic real time scoring function, Male/ Female/ Chorus singing facility, Pitch control facility and Microphones facilities. Example:-

![Figure 16: Persang Karaoke Player (an advertisement)](image)
The Times of India, New Delhi - 17/09/2013
Availability of such gadgets provides a chance to the amateur singers or the people taking singing as a hobby, to just practice singing with the recorded background music, without worrying about any supporting musician or live accompaniment. Likewise, in Sri Lanka also, many sing-along or ‘Karaoke’ compact disks, with pre-recorded music of numerous popular songs, are available in the market for the amateur vocalists.

It is interesting to note here that some special music groups have now emerged in the field of music in Sri Lanka due to the technological revolution. As a new trend, they provide the listeners with opportunities to listen to the compositions which they themselves produce. The traditional music groups basically focused on utilizing instruments in order to sing their own songs or those of others. However, there is a contemporary trend of existing groups with a small number of members (even two or three). Such groups also tend to perform even without background orchestras. The famous Sri Lankan music group named Centigradez is an example of this. It consists of six members. However, this practice has now been spread to other music concerts as well.

It was Bhathiya Jayakody and Santhush Weeraman who first introduced this trend to the context of Sri Lankan music. Their tradition, which is basically based on computerized means, was followed by various other young musicians. On the other hand, since they have used electronically generated sounds, sound effects and rhythm styles, it is difficult to perform some of their music tracks without actually using such technologies. Despite the realistic sensations given by these compositions (as if lively listing to a CD player), the majority of music loving people still prefer to condemn them.

Performances of these artists are not just musical, rather there are musical performances. This is an interesting instance where the technology has been used to make a parallel between the "musicality" and "performativity". One striking aspect of this argument is that even if so-called "classical" singer follows the same way, the audience and the critics
would not accept it as a serious issue because they would think that these concerts themselves are live.

A music program named “Saadu Nada” is such kind of devotional music (Bethi Gee) performance which is organized by a private Sri Lankan television channel to commemorate Load Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and the death on the month of May. The program is telecast on the Wesak Full Moon Poya Day of every year. It is also true that the organizers of music concerts also try to pretend that the concerts are live with sound systems and musicians with their instruments on the stage.

The practice of using pre-recorded musical tracks has affected not only the music performances but it has also influenced some stage dramas. Under the usual practice, five to ten musicians sit on one side of the stage (or in the orchestra pit) to provide live music when a play is being presented. However, due to various issues such as financial restraints, some directors use pre-recorded music tracks for their plays.

However, these performance practices which are based on modern technology have also affected the uniqueness of live music performances in critical ways. Concerned with live music performances, the main feature of each and every performance is its uniqueness and it necessitates the creation of the right environment, technology and employing musicians to the performance every time. But in order to maintain the perfect quality, selected programs are recorded and sometimes dubbing facility is applied only to voices (or sometimes using the miming technique).

The influences of recording technology have also led to result in this kind of sentiments among the masses. People who are exposed to the recorded music pieces commonly expect the same quality during live performances as well. Consequently, there is a trend of hiring recording engineers for sound balancing at public performances to present a live music experience similar to recorded music. As Mark Katz has pointed out, today music
is totally a technologically mediated experience, and, As a result, of this trend, lives performances also live up to recordings.

But, As far as the traditional audiences are concerned, this practice has led to diminish the relationship between the audience and the artist for they always expect a unique and live music experience from artists according to the appropriateness of time and space.

Walter Benjamin in his essay titled “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” has pointed out the ways in which the mechanical reproductions had affected the uniqueness of art and its aesthetic aura in particular. In his conviction, the practice of the usage of recorded music for performances has also affected the uniqueness of performances.

John Pfeiffer has stated that “a recording is one thing, a concert is another, and never the twain shall meet”. However, this common ideology becomes invalid in relation to the modern developments.

Similarly, pre-composed songs employing MIDI technology play a major role in some performance spaces. In many cases, small scale musical groups (these groups are commonly known as one man, three piece performers) utilize MIDI files of favorite and timely popular songs for the embellishment of wedding ceremonies and other small scale home parties and especially some television and radio programs. Due to the higher demand for MIDI files of famous songs, a commercial has emerged for such song formats among those groups and as a result some programmers sell MIDI files via internet by creating their own web pages and blogs. On most occasions, other original instruments and vocals are coupled according to the pre-composed tracks. Consequently, they are able to maintain the same experience in par with the recorded albums. Utilization of the feature of multi-track recording using semi-professional keyboards (especially Yamaha brands) has also influenced this practice.
This feature has also been utilized as a current trend in the professional recording environments in Sri Lanka. When recording new songs, some musicians tend to compose (in this field, the word "programming" is used instead of "composing") new tracks on Keyboards employing multi-track feature and then transfer those pre-composed tracks to software for voicing, mastering and other manipulation purposes. This technique has been used to record the song “Wesi Devide Tururaginda Epa Temanna” of Nanda Malini.

7.10 The Impact of recording techniques on Sri Lankan Folk Music

The systems of folk musical traditions represent the original and typical nature of tunes that firmly belonged to different communities and to different sound cultures. Such traditions are also marked as the legendary sources of any given culture.

Even though there is a limited range of melodic diversity in the context of Sri Lankan music, these music forms have unique features. The rendering styles of the vocal and playing patterns of the instruments are different according to the context in which these styles are performed. This feature can be seen with regard to both singing and drumming traditions.

Viewed from the perspective of the recording technologies, they have paved the way for conserving the aforementioned traditions as cultural and historical legends. The same technology has also been influential in shaping the traditional and typical styles. As far as the traditional performance practices are concerned, the way and the pattern of rendition has adjusted according to the technological limitations, or sometimes, according to the suitability for creations. As a result, a tradition of drumming has been developed in the field of music in Sri Lanka (especially for music recording). This is also compatible with the technology based performances.
The physical structures and the shapes of drums, the typical nature of producing sounds, and their playing styles have been critical in this evolution. The main instruments such as Gataberaya, Daula and the Low country drums are cylindrical in shape and both sides of the drums have to be vibrated by the drummer using either palms or a stick for the proper tones and nuances to be generated. When playing Gataberaya and low country drum both palms of hands are used whereas the player uses his/her one palm and a stick with his/her other hand to emit the proper sound of the Daul drum. But in ritualistic performances both palms of player are used to play the Daul drum. Vibrating one face of the drum also affects the other face and the vibration of the other (opposite) face makes the expected syllable completed (This principle is not only limited to Sri Lankan drums but it is also related to other drum cultures in which double-faced drums are used).

Capturing such sensitive drum nuances is highly critical and it is difficult to do so without having a proper knowledge of the subject of recording. Even though the unique nuances of sound are possible to be captured by using different microphone techniques, the natural playing style has now been replaced with soft playing styles, especially due to certain limitations of the studios and the technology. The new playing style is commonly employed in the field and in some live performances compatible to sound systems.

Not only the instruments, but also the styles of voice have been largely transformed by the technology. According to the nature of folk musical tradition in Sri Lanka, vocal rendition is of fairly higher frequencies when compared to the other traditions. But, when these forms are recorded for the purpose of conservation, resource persons are advised to render them in a normal manner\textsuperscript{47}. Similarly, such a method is also applied when recording these songs on cassettes and CDs as creative music compositions. As a result, of the above practices, the entire nature of folk music system has been transformed according to the suitability of the recording technology. Similarly, adaptation and arranging typical folk poetry (Jana kavi) according to proper music rudiments by the musicians who followed the nationalistic movement also caused this transformation.
Similarly, the systematic music education is also caused to reshape the rendering styles of folk music.

However, the timely developed technological involvements have considerably affected these folk styles and patterns in various ways. These legendary folk traditions are mostly shaped and certain systematically arranged folk music tunes are disseminated by various radio channels. The National and private broadcasting companies in Sri Lanka are playing a vital role both as the promoters and the creators of public opinion. The younger generations, both rural and urban, normally tend accept these changes as the proper traditions. However, these mass media based music disseminations thoroughly affect the regional genres. A typical instance of this is that the traditional tunes and the song traditions of the aborigines of Sri Lanka (the Veddas) have been subjected to such transformation.

The dissemination of cassette music has also resulted in consequences like this. This practice was critically condemned by the late Mr. W.B. Makuloluwa, who was one of the leading musicians in Sri Lanka. The following is from his comments on the issue:

“My fear is that in another 10 or 15 years’ time, with all the cassettes that find their way into the remotest village and with none of their own music available, people will get conditioned to this cheap kind of music. Then they will lose their own culture . . . I’m not being sentimental. If this disappears, then the whole world culture will lose one little aspect. However, small a nation we are, we still have our own way of singing, accompanying, intoning, making movements and so on. We can make a small but distinctive contribution to world culture...”\(^{48}\)

As he has pointed out, some hereditary local folk musical traditions have influenced such music that has been disseminated through cassettes and other mass media.
The Viridu, is an “extempore” poetic tradition and which is used in various religious and social contexts as a form of describing events employing music. The typical instrument employed in viridu is the Ath Rabana (hand tambourine) which belongs to the “athatha” category of Sri Lankan musical instruments. Verses of Viridu have made impacts on typical melodic forms due the influence of popular melodies of the famous songs that are commonly broadcasted by radio channels and other popular masses. Now there is a modern Viridu style which is sung according to the popular tunes.

The conceptual framework and the “caste hierarchy” which has been constructed based on the “Sinhala popular Buddhism”, the technology has also been affected the religious musical offerings conducted in the “Temple of Tooth Relic” in Sri Lanka.

Interestingly, the superior hierarchy of the Temple of Tooth Relic is reflected in the offering of hevisi pujas (greeting of drums) and the music (in particular drum beats) clearly depicts the hierarchical order. There are five types of musical instruments employed in producing hevisi drumming which are commonly known as “Pancha turyanada” or five different sounds produced by musical instruments. All these instruments are used in the above-mentioned most venerable place. In contrast, hevisi puja at an ordinary temples use only three instruments.

The frequency of the performances is also variable between the most sacred places and ordinary temples. The tradition of drumming is specially performed three times a day - in the morning (aluyam duraya), mid-day (madyanna duraya) and the evening. (Sandya duraya) at the Temple of Tooth Relic. Each one of these sessions has its own significance because of the uniqueness of the music played at each session.

This 'drum-offering' is an inherited tradition of the Temple of Tooth Relic. The same repertoire is currently being played throughout some other ordinary Buddhist temples and some homes of the country as a passion. It has to be noted that this particular practice of
"drum-sound-offerings" to the Temple of Tooth Relic has been challenged to a certain extent for its uniqueness and hierarchical aura since the recording technology. The main objective of recording these hereditary drum repertoires by respective authorities is to promote the Sir Lankan Buddhist religious music tradition throughout the world for commercial purposes.

Apart from the above-mentioned transformations some benefits can also be noted. As an advantage of the development of modern recording technologies, some unique *tonecolors* of typical instruments that have never been utilized for music compositions in the earlier eras, have been used. For example, the tone color of Horanewa or the local oboe is such a development.

*Horanewa* is commonly used as an accompanied instrument for drumming. Without considering its pitch limitations, it was utilized only to play interludes for the folk play called *Nadagama* along with the instrument called *Maddalaya*.

Even though it has a unique tone color, as it’s unbalanced pitch and also the limited range musicians did not employ this instrument for music creations in the previous periods at all. On the contrary, especially because of sampling technology and pitch adjusting possibilities, the contemporary musicians frequently use this instrument for their compositions.

### 7.11 Technological Influence on Extended Music Compositions

Despite the fact that the songs have been recorded as a common form and medium of expression and appreciation, some extended music compositions of Sri Lankan musicians have seldom been recorded aiming at selected audience. These kinds of extended music compositions were commonly recorded for the SLBC in the early days by the eminent musicians utilizing the timely developed technologies. When compared to the past
technologies, the contemporary advances of certain recording technologies have resulted in many new facilities and advantages for the musicians to enjoy almost all the aspects of recording technologies with regard to recording the extended compositions. Nevertheless, in the early days of the recording technology, musicians had involved in a better practice to perform the recordings at once otherwise the recording session should have to be re-continuing from the beginning.

As far as the modern extended music compositions of the Sri Lankan musicians are concerned, latest or timely developed facilities have been utilized by them in various ways to accomplish and finalize their creativity to meet their expectations. Music compositions have utilized multi-track features. The facility called "metronome" and pitch correction plug-ins are now used in order to maintain the proper tempo throughout the entire composition as a tactic of overcoming the natural and common failures.

Mr. Kolitha Bhanu Dissanayaka in his album Inspiration has utilized digital multi-track recording facility and other related technological tools where necessary. He described his experience as follows:

“"When I recorded my compositions, I decided to use the contemporarily popular and most favorable and applicable technology to address the current feelings of the listeners. I also decided to seek the service of Mr. Dayananda Perera who is one of the leading and well experienced engineers in the field of music recording in Sri Lanka today. I also had to think of how we record these extended compositions in a single take. In connection with it, we identified the appropriate points and divided the composition accordingly. Then we record them as segments and Finally, combined those segments into one composition. In order to maintain the proper tempo throughout the composition, we used the Metronome facility. But we didn’t try to add any pre-recorded samplers to my
compositions and both acoustic and electronic instruments were lively
played for recording⁴⁹.

Similarly, Mr. Ravibandu Vidyapathi who is also a leading figure in both drumming and
dancing in Sri Lanka has utilized the same technology according to the suitability of his
percussion compositions. The following are his own words on this:

“My latest CD album “Bahu Ranga” is another kind of experiment, and in
that, I attempted to give a new fusion-type aesthetic experience to the
audience using drums and other percussion instruments. Here I didn’t
depend on technology and used the technology only to fulfill my major
expectations. I used digital multi-track recording as the main technique
and long compositions were recorded as segments and finally, were
connected them into the final composition. In some cases the basic track
and other accompanied tracks were laid accordingly. Even though we had
to use some pre-recorded samples, we didn’t totally depend on the sound
banks which included in certain software. For that we used Percussion pad
or Octapad. To maintain the proper pitch of vocals, we had to use the
pitch corrector since I assigned amateur singers for these compositions.”⁵⁰

However, on some occasions, the insufficiencies of the existing technologies influence
extended music compositions and other orchestral works. As far as the necessary devices,
especially the microphones are concerned; some studios do not have microphones to
capture some frequency ranges that belong to the typical Sri Lankan instruments
especially required for percussions. The common nature of implementation of specific as
well as limited instruments for music compositions is the major reason behind this issue.
Utilizing a limited range of instruments (Violin, flute, Sitar, Guitars (lead, bass, and
rhythm), Tabla, western drums and electronic key boards are used in every composition.
Application of other instruments such as Esraj, Mandolin etc. is very rare in music
compositions), both in live performances and in the recording sessions, can be seen as a
common phenomenon and a conventional practice in the field. Another reason which gives rise to these limitations is the fact that the technology has not been upgraded according to the contemporary practices. Viewed from the angle of the professional studio spaces, it is impossible to accommodate more than 20 musicians at one time for recordings. On the other hand, the nature of multi-track recording which needs enclosed studios itself has led to these limitations. Since the practice of recording one by one or section of instruments at one time, the studio owners do not pay much attention to the space.

In most cases, these limitations particularly impact the typical Sri Lankan traditions as well as the drum orchestras. Similarly, the inadequate attention paid by the majority of people to orchestral music and other extended music compositions and the culture of listening to such music have also weakened the ambitions of releasing such kind of large musical works.

However, due to such limitations, sometimes the musicians who have a keen interest in recording such compositions tend to move to other countries, especially to India, for the purpose of recording their composition under experienced engineers as well as newly developed technologies. Even certain traditions such as the English musical genres have also not been developed in Sri Lanka due to these kinds of technical issues.

### 7.12 The Emergence of “Re-mixing” and “Re-making”

The genre which has resulted out of 'remixing' previous songs using the digital technology can be identified as the other trend which is influencing Sri Lankan music.

The remixed versions of some selected old-time favorites and popular songs immerged as a genre in the context of Sri Lankan music, especially as an outcome of the experiments done by a number of young musicians. The newly formed tradition differed from the
similar traditions throughout the world in many respects. In the remixed versions in other countries, the sonic texture of music was augmented or amplified by applying bass and additional beats according to the suitability of music textures of different genres. Even though the Sri Lankan musicians have also followed this practice, in general they have tended to extract melody and sections of lyrics from a song and then they composed new lyrics according to the melody. As far as the limited numbers of remix versions are concerned, it is clearly seen that they have attempted to interlink their voices when they remix duets and embedded rap styles according to their choice.

Examples for Sri Lankan Remixes:

(1). *Midum silen pavi*

The original version of this song is *Saawan ka Mahina* which is a Hindi song of the film *Milan*. In its initial part, the original song gives the impression of a lady who has been asked to sing a phrase by a teacher. However, in the remixed version, the original part that deals with the teacher has been extracted and the local singers’ voices have been mixed thereafter. Only adlib has been taken from the original song and the lady’s voice in the original version has been replaced with that of the local singer Bathya Jayakodi. The rest of the song comprises of the same melody with new lyrics and an incorporated rap-styled singing.

(2). *Mata Aloke genadevi sansaraye* (the song belongs to the film *ayyai malli* (‘two brothers’ screened in 1957))

*Mata Aloke genadevi* is the Sri Lankan remixed version of a Sri Lankan film song (from the Sri Lankan film *ayyai malli*) which was originally sung by a South Indian songstress.
*Jikki.* The famous Sri Lankan songstress *Lata Walpola* sang it later on. Additional drum beats have been added to the remixed version(s).

A close look at both of the above mentioned instances clearly reveals that these artists have attempted to form and maintain continuity between the past and present forms which could not be possible to experiment in reality, except by using the modern recording techniques.

Another aspect of both of these songs is that they have greatly focused on the rhythm of the original version. The reason behind may be the fact that these songs are basically performed/played on dancing floors and/or in DJ environments, where more attention is given to the rhythm or the beat of songs. The vast majority of Sri Lankan re-mixed versions belong to Cut and Mix category, while the others belong to the categories such as dance mix, DJ mix, Dub mix *etc.*

It has also become clear that these practices are usually criticized on the basis of conventional norms and mindset, both by the audience and scholars, without conducting practical research aimed at re-shaping or adopting this trend in any meaningful way. Following statement proves such views of the common people:

“Re-mixing is not suitable for our music culture. It distorts and destroys the aesthetic appeal of original music compositions. By misusing modern recording technology and techniques in such a way, new artists are damaging the aesthetically enriched music compositions. I do not listen to such distorted songs and also, I do not buy music albums of such artists. These people are ruining our Sri Lankan music.”

Even though, the majority of people criticize such re-mixed songs, on some occasions, like private house parties and dance floors etc., some even appreciate these songs for the newly added thrilling rhythm or beats, suiting such occasions.
Some other reasons such as the lack of a strong critical tradition in the country, the age-old practice of criticizing music based on the conventional theories such as the 'Rasa' theory, has also led to such misconceptions in relation to musical entertainment. It is also important that the weak level of sensitivity to, and knowledge of the international trends of music has critically narrowed down the minds of those who are in the field.

But as a trend or to counter those re-mix versions a new style or another trend called Re-makes in the field.

**7.12.1 Re-make versions**

As a counter-response to the popular re-mix versions, a new style called Re-makes has now emerged. Accordingly, re-makes of original song compositions have been re-launched by both novel and professional artists who have originally sung these songs targeting different recording media. Comparatively, it can be seen that this practice has been generally experienced by novel artists who have come to the field of music through the contemporary reality TV shows.

It is obvious that the melodies that belong to the original versions and the manner of rendering voices have transformed according to their new musical characteristics. As a common practice, these artists tend to attempt to emphasize a feeling which is not present in the original versions by using both voice and music. Similarly, music is also arranged according to the suitability of modern technologies by employing both acoustic and computer-based synthesizing methods. On the other hand, the influences of jazz and other western styles could be seen in the musical arrangements of these re-makes.

In general, such practices have been given different interpretations through music and also by technology to their original versions according to the expectations of the new arrangers and the traditions of music which are used in them. Conversely, these practices
have led to re-incarnate the popular melodies of the previous compositions to meet to the
taste of new generations. Examples can be given as follows:

1. *Muthukuda ihalana Malwarusawe*\(^{55}\)
2. *Rahase Handana Apa hegum* of Peshala Manoj and Samita Mudunkotuwa\(^{56}\)
   (Originally sung by Clerance wijewardana and Neela Wikramasingha)
3. *Madese Wedana* of Shehan Mihirang (originally sung by Roy Peries)\(^{57}\)

The private radio channels and other alternative media such as You Tube and other web-
spaces have also led to such a situation. Some songs have been re-produced as audio-
visuals (this is also another trend) by private radio channels. These productions can be
found on the Web Pages of their respective websites such as (1). [http://www.hirufm.lk/](http://www.hirufm.lk/)

Some of these re-make versions have been mixed according to the suitability of the DJ
environments. As a result, of such technology based trends, the contemporary young
mixing artists have been able to take part in the field of Sri Lankan music.

However, when viewed from the perspective of some songs that have been created based
on this trend, it becomes clear that even though these are commonly known as re-mixes
or re-makes by people, in relation to their characteristics they can be seen as re-arranged
versions of the original compositions depending on the modern technology. It should be
stressed that these practices have given a new dimension to the field as well.

However, it can also be seen that the audience share negative comments on these
practices in general. According to TanKel\(^{58}\), the textures of the original version and the
re-mixed version of the original song have been changed As a result, of the practice of
remixing. This has resulted in two different contextual identities of both versions. This
has clearly resulted in segmenting and grouping different audience depending on
different choices and appreciations. As far as the Sri Lankan radio channels are
concerned, the practice of broadcasting without identifying the contextual validity of the re-mixed versions, which are especially created for DJ environments, has led to various misconceptions.

On the other hand, improper uses of original and aesthetically enriched compositions has resulted in refusing and criticizing such genres in Sri Lankan music contexts. However, as Chanan\textsuperscript{59} has mentioned, the misuse of music has become a new norm with the technological transformations.

In the earlier times, a single recording was done initially and then it was permanently mixed\textsuperscript{60}. However, the latest benefits of technology have dramatically transformed this practice. At present, even mixed compositions or a section of a given song have become raw materials for a new mix or a new composition.

Confusing the original version with its re-arranged version has resulted in many issues. If people appreciate both versions as different productions by identifying their unique features, it would and need not be considered a major issue. However, such practices are promoted in other music communities and cultures, especially in the western popular musical cultures. Different versions of one song are arranged according to the appropriateness of various music genres.

\textbf{7.13 Influence of Recording Technology on Musicians}

Apart from the above-mentioned influences, the development of applying technological means to musical productions has also made various kinds of impacts on both experienced and young musicians. In many cases, the musicians attempt to use their own recorded tracks (especially performance based recordings) as guiding tracks in order to supplement their vocal and instrumental practices. This practice generally helps most of the famous singers to "pretend" that they are performing very well in public performances.
and concerts such as musical shows. New musicians also tend to use these tracks in the form of teaching materials for educational practices; and as a resource to tune their instrumental exercises for different concert performances and competitions. Accordingly, recorded compositions have broadened the scope of the field. However, there are many negative consequences of these tracks than the positive ones. More specifically, this practice has led to the formation of a particular generation of musicians who blindly imitate not only the songs, but also the voices and singing styles of the established musicians. Many contemporary reality-shows further assist these trends.

The compositions of internationally acclaimed musicians are often used by the majority of Sri Lankan musicians in order to improve their playing styles and instrumental technique. Another objective behind using them is enhancing the aesthetic attraction of these compositions. Apart from that, these tracks are also used to transcribe the notations of recorded compositions for live orchestrations.

There are some cases where the musicians prefer to use pre-recorded samples embedded in music-related software in order to improve their instrumental techniques and their applicability. This has also enabled them to use a variety of playing styles. Nowadays, these kinds of practices and their results are commonly seen in the context of Sri Lankan music.

Technological developments have affected the recording artists in different ways. Even though groups of musicians record a composition at the same time in similarity to the earlier practices, the present day musicians are isolated in the studios according to the technical nature of multi-track recording. This has led to the use of headphones during the recording process. Certain instruments are located in separate places such as “cubicles” depending on their audio frequencies and timbre quality. However, all musicians are connected together via headphones and they can easily listen to others. In
some occasions, these kinds of technological features affect some musicians who play certain instruments in a different manner.

“Playing instruments in concert and recording are two different things. When we play in concerts, we can hear our playing sounds directly but in recording it is different. Musicians have to be familiar with the technological features in such situations. In the earlier days, we had the same problem. Sometimes we could not maintain even proper pitch because of such technological reasons…”

On the other hand, some vocalists (mostly amateurs) face specific difficulties while recording their voices due to the fact that they have to listen to other musical arrangements (harmonies and counterpart) in the same music composition. On such occasions, those tracks can be muted for the betterment of the vocal rendition. As far as these advance features are concerned, the modern recording technologies have given effortless facilities to the musicians in order to develop their professional career in the field of recording.

As far as the contemporary music and music-based practices are concerned, one obvious factor is that such practices are unimaginable without the recording techniques and technology. It also becomes clear that the recording engineers, mixing engineers, and music programmers play a significant role apart from the musicians. Correspondingly, they are the people who arrange music compositions as the final output for masses. As far as the evolution of Sri Lankan musical culture is considered, it is clear that they have not been given due recognition in comparison with the singers though they considerably contribute to the progress of the field.

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3 Stravinskey, An Auto Biography, 123-124.


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